

BlackJack 4.0
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INTRODUCTION

Ever since I bought my Macintosh, I have been very disappointed by the lack of quality Blackjack programs written for it. None of the programs that I have seen have been able to combine adequate graphics, flexibility of rules and realism to my complete liking. For that reason I decided to write my own program. I consider this program to be an ongoing project for myself. It will be continually improved and have many new features added to it as time goes on. Your comments and suggestions are welcome and will help form the basis for new versions. This program is Shareware. If you like it, a \$5 donation would be appreciated.

The program was written and compiled using Turbo Pascal. It has only been tested on a Mac 512KE. Comments concerning other configurations that this program will run on would be appreciated.

STARTUP

The first thing the player sees is the Players dialog. The program will accomodate from 1 to 7 players. Check a box to activate a player (Note : At least one player must be activated in order to continue). The minimum bet field will be explained later. The program deals only with net results which is why you cannot input a beginning bankroll. A new player always starts with \$0. After the OK button is clicked the player is presented with the Rules dialog. Select your preferences (see explanation of rules below) and click OK. The SHUFFLE button will then appear. This gives you a chance to take a look at the options and set them to your liking before starting play. When you are ready, press the SHUFFLE button to shuffle the deck and you're ready to go.

RULES

Number of decks : 1, 2, 4, 6 or 8. Whenever this option is changed, the deck will be resized and shuffled.

Deal face up or face down. If cards are dealt face up the program will pause (requiring an extra button press), allowing the hands to be examined, before starting play of the individual hands. If you choose to have the cards dealt face down, play will commence as soon as the cards have been dealt.

Double-down after split. If No is chosen, you may only double-down on the first two cards dealt. If Yes is chosen, you may double-down on the first two cards of each split hand.

Re-split Aces. If No is chosen, you will receive one card on each split ace. If Yes is chosen and one of the split aces is dealt another ace, you have the option of splitting that pair also. In either case, split aces cannot be drawn to.

Surrender. If you choose Yes, you may forfeit your first two cards and half your bet provided the dealer does not have blackjack. If the dealer is not checking his hole card with a 10 up (see below) and subsequently turns up a blackjack, the surrender bet is off (referred to as 'late surrender') and the player loses his full bet.

Dealer checks hole card with 10 up. If Yes is chosen and the dealer's hole card is an ace, he immediately turns up the blackjack and settles the bets. If No is chosen, play will commence normally. If the dealer turns up a blackjack when it is his turn to play, all double-down, split pair and surrender bets are off. Player only loses his initial bet.

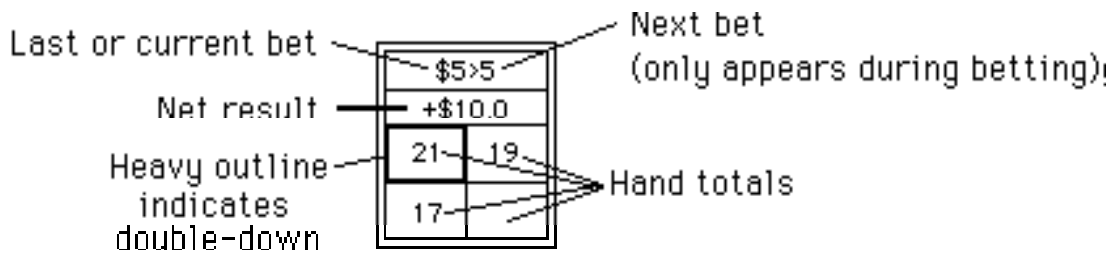
Note on split pairs. There is a maximum of 3 splits per player (4 hands).

DISPLAY

In the upper left hand corner is the discard rack. It indicates the percentage of the deck that has been discarded.

To the right of the discard rack is the POINT COUNT INFO box. See below for a further description of what these numbers mean.

Through the middle of the screen are the 7 player info boxes. The graphic below describes the meanings of their contents.



The player name and current net dollar amount for this game appear in boxes along the bottom of the screen (for active players only). The net result and current net dollar amounts are carried out to only one decimal point due to 1) space constraints and 2) since bets are limited to whole dollars, there will never be a fractional amount other than .5. Negative amounts appear in parentheses throughout the program.

PLAY

After all hands are settled (or after pressing the SHUFFLE button at startup), a betting device (for lack of a better term) appears at the far right active player position for inputting bets. All other players have a BET button. The top line of each player's info box now displays a dollar amount (last bet) followed by '>' and another number. This second number represents your bet for the next hand. It automatically defaults to your last bet. Pressing any of the numbered buttons will add the corresponding amount to the next hand bet and display the modified bet in the info box. To subtract an amount, hold down the Option key while pressing a numbered button. Press the CLR button to set to zero. Press the MIN button to set your bet to the amount defined in the Players dialog. To move the bet device, press the BET button of the player who's bet you wish modify. You may place a bet of \$0 to sit out a hand. When you have all your bets set the way you want them, simply click DEAL. At that point, bet amounts will be subtracted from each player's net figure in the name box and the next hand will be dealt.

From this point on things should be fairly obvious as to their function. If the dealer has an ace up, players are prompted for insurance. Players play their hands one player at a time, again due to screen limitations. You will notice that the name box at the bottom of the screen is inverted to black to indicate who's hand is currently be played. Once the current player's hand(s) has been played you won't see those cards again, so if you're using a count strategy take this into consideration. When the dealer reaches the point (between hands) where he needs to shuffle, the SHUFFLE button will appear. This allows the player to view the dealer's last hand before the shuffle commences. Click the SHUFFLE button and the dealer will then remove his cards from the table, shuffle and you will be back in betting mode. Only in rare cases will the deck need to be shuffled during the playing of hands (this occurs when the dealer reaches the last card in the deck, which by the way won't be dealt). In that event, the dealer will automatically shuffle without the need for the SHUFFLE button.

MENUS

File (items in this menu are disabled during the playing of hands).

-New

Prompts to save current game if necessary and then sets up a new game.

-Open

Prompts to save current game if necessary and then prompts for a previously saved game to be opened. When starting a new game, via New or Open, you start with a fresh deck.

-Save

Save the current game in the file displayed in the window's title bar. If the file has not previously been saved, you will be prompted for the filename. Players (including their statistics and current winnings or losses), dealer statistics, rules and all option preferences are kept in this file. Players cannot be saved individually at this time.

-Save As

Prompts for filename then saves to that file. This file now becomes the active file for all subsequent saves.

-Quit

Before quitting, the program writes rules and option preferences to its data fork. The next time the program starts up, it will use these settings as defaults.

Edit - This menu is only activated for desk accessory use.

Options

-Players (disabled during playing of hands.)

Brings up the same dialog that was presented at startup.

-Rules (disabled during playing of hands.)

Brings up the same dialog that was presented at startup.

-Show/Hide Count Display

This item toggles between showing the count display and hiding it.

-No Pause/Pause After Stand/Surrender

This option affects the requirement of pressing the OK button after pressing STAND or SURRENDER. If you select NO PAUSE, your cards will immediately disappear after pressing either of those two buttons and the program will proceed to the next player.

-Show/Don't Show Burn Card (for Atlantic City players)

This toggle option allows you to view the burn card immediately upon completion of the shuffle (this is the only time it can be viewed) and account for it in the point count.

-Deck Composition

Brings up a dialog displaying information concerning the number of seen and unseen cards of each type (2's, 3's, 4's, etc.).

-Shuffle Now (disabled during playing of hands.)

Allows for the deck to be reshuffled at player's request.

Stats

-Dealer

Brings up a dialog showing dealer's stats for this session.

-Players (1-7)

These 7 items bring up a dialog showing stats for each of the players. If a particular seat is inactive, its corresponding menu item will be dimmed. Note : Clicking inside an active player's info box will have the same effect as choosing the menu item. The << and >> buttons in this dialog are a means of viewing the next active player's stats without closing the dialog and then selecting another player.

-Clear Stats (disabled during playing of hands.)

Brings up a dialog which provides a means of clearing dealer and/or any active player's stats to zero.

Background (choose a background pattern from one of the following)

- White
- Light Gray
- Medium Gray
- Dark Gray
- Black

DESCRIPTION OF POINT COUNT SYSTEM

The count system used by this program is based on Edward O. Thorp's book Beat the Dealer. I will explain how the figures in the Point Count Display are arrived at, but if you are not familiar with this system, I would suggest that you buy the book and read it in order to fully understand what these numbers mean and how to use them to their fullest advantage.

RUNNING - Each card, as it is seen, is given a point value as follows :

2's - 6's (+1) 7's - 9's (0) 10's & Aces (-1). 'Running' represents the running total of all these point values. Each time the deck is shuffled, this figure is set to zero. In the unlikely event that the deck needs to be shuffled during the playing of hands, the point count is set to zero and then re-adjusted to reflect the cards that are still in play and have been seen. The larger the number, the more advantageous the remaining deck becomes to the player.

HI/LO INDEX - This number is arrived at by dividing the Running Count by the number of unseen cards in the deck. For purposes of simplification, that percentage is multiplied by 100 and then rounded to the nearest integer. Again, larger numbers represent a favorable deck.

NON-10 : 10 - This is simply the ratio of non-10's to 10's that remain unseen. In this case, lower numbers represent a favorable deck.

ACES LEFT - Just an extra piece of information that a lot of players like to keep track of.

CONCLUSION

This program is nowhere close to implementing all of the features that I have planned for it. Once again, please feel free to EMail suggestions and bug reports. Your suggestions will help me decide which new or modified features I should work on next.